

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING FOR COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

SECIA – Environmental Inventory

Prepared by
Mark-Anthony Da Gama Rose

A CONSORTIUM PROJECT OF: Augsburg College; College of St. Catherine; Concordia University; Hamline University; Macalester College; Metropolitan State University; Minneapolis Community and Technical College; Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) at the University of Minnesota; University of St. Thomas; and Minneapolis community and neighborhood representatives.

CURA RESOURCE COLLECTION

**Center for Urban and Regional Affairs
University of Minnesota
330 Humphrey Center**

SECIA – Environmental Inventory

**Prepared by
Mark-Anthony Da Gama Rose
Graduate Research Assistant, Macalester College
Conducted on behalf of the South East Como Improvement Association
March, 2002**

*This report (NPCR 1186) is also available on the CURA website:
www.cura.umn.edu/search/index.php*

September, 2005

Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization (NPCR) supported the work of the author of this work, but has not reviewed it for publication.

The content is solely the responsibility of the author and is not necessarily endorsed by NPCR.

NPCR is coordinated by the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs at the University of Minnesota. NPCR is supported by grants from The Minneapolis Foundation, the McKnight Foundation, The Bremer Foundation, and The St. Paul Travelers Foundation.

Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization

330 Hubert H. Humphrey Center

301 - 19th Avenue South

Minneapolis, MN 55455

phone: 612/625-1020

e-mail: ksn@umn.edu

website: <http://www.npcr.org/>

SECIA – Environmental Inventory



Mark-Antony Da Gama Rose
Macalester College
03/21/02

Executive Summary

- SECIA produced an environmental inventory website that shows company profiles of those that have MPCA air permits (60 companies in total). The profiles include background information about the company and the major pollutants they emit every year
- The website is purely a research tool for residents in the Southeast Como neighborhood to peruse and learn about which types of pollutants companies are emitting and what are the health effects of such emissions
- The next course of action is to persuade companies to implement an emissions reduction plan, which can be achieved with the help of SECIA and the residents of the Southeast Como neighborhood
- It is also SECIA's intention for this website to act as a template for other neighborhood groups in Minneapolis to adopt so as to create a network of neighborhood action in promoting the reduction of emissions

Goals

- Create an Environmental Inventory of air pollutants that companies in Southeast Como emit in the form of a website
- Research air permit data from the MPCA—permit number, when last permit was issued, and when permit expires
- Understanding neighborhood dynamics by attending meetings with community groups

Methods

- Research business profiles of each company in Southeast Como that have air permits using Infotrac and the Minnesota Registry of Manufacturers (2001).
- Take photos of the outsides of each of the companies.
- Research air permit files from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (60 files in total).

Important Decisions

- The Introduction page was added to provide a summary of why SECIA intended to put together this website and to give some background on how residents in the Southeast Como neighborhood are been effected by air pollution from local companies
- There were two main methods we wanted to use for viewers to gain access to company pages, either by clicking on the maps of each of the neighborhoods or by searching the company name alphabetically
- We wanted to highlight only the most important business information in the right hand margin of each of the company pages such as company address, website, contact person, annual sales and product types
- In addition, we created links to the Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry (ATSDR) that provide a description of pollutants that companies emit and their health effects
- We also inserted graphs from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) that illustrate emission levels in tons per year of the greatest pollutant the company emitted over the last ten years
- Finally, on some of the company pages we included a link to Scorecard's Environmental Release Report of particular companies so that viewers could see how companies are ranked compared to others in the county, state and country
- On the Helpful Links page, a link to download the Word document containing the list of companies in Southeast Como that have air permits (obtained from the MPCA) was added so that viewers to the website can see the data we began with
- The Disclaimer Page was added to state that SECIA is not liable for the accuracy of the data and any errors that are found within the data
- In addition, the Selected List of Works Consulted link was added to show the list of online resources that SECIA used to compile the inventory

Limitations

- There were some difficulties in being able to research the air permit files for companies in Southeast Como – some of the files had extremely sparse information while we were unable to locate current permit information for a few files
- The Environmental Inventory website is only a research tool for the Southeast Como neighborhood and local community organizations to provide them with information on the types and effects of pollutants that companies in the area emit every year
- Feedback from the companies is the next course of action which will take time and effort to achieve, with the end goal to try and persuade companies to implement an emissions reduction program

Things that could be added

- More complete air permit information for each of the companies including history of company compliance with permit regulations
- Feedback from the companies including whether they have already implemented or are in the process of implementing an emissions reduction program
- In addition, there could be permit information for these and other companies in Southeast Como concerning water and wastewater regulations

Company Profile Pages





We took photos of the facades of each of the companies and then uploaded the photos onto the website. Each photo is clickable to show a larger version of the image

General Mills Inc.
1201 Jackson St. NE
Minneapolis, MN 55413-1579
Tel: 612-764-2606
Fax: 612-764-2786
www.generalmills.com/corporate

Business Profile

Oat flour milling

Number of Employees

40

Annual Sales

\$10-24.9 Million

Contact

Bruce Hoshor, Plant Manager

Parent Company

General Mills Inc.

1 General Mills Blvd.

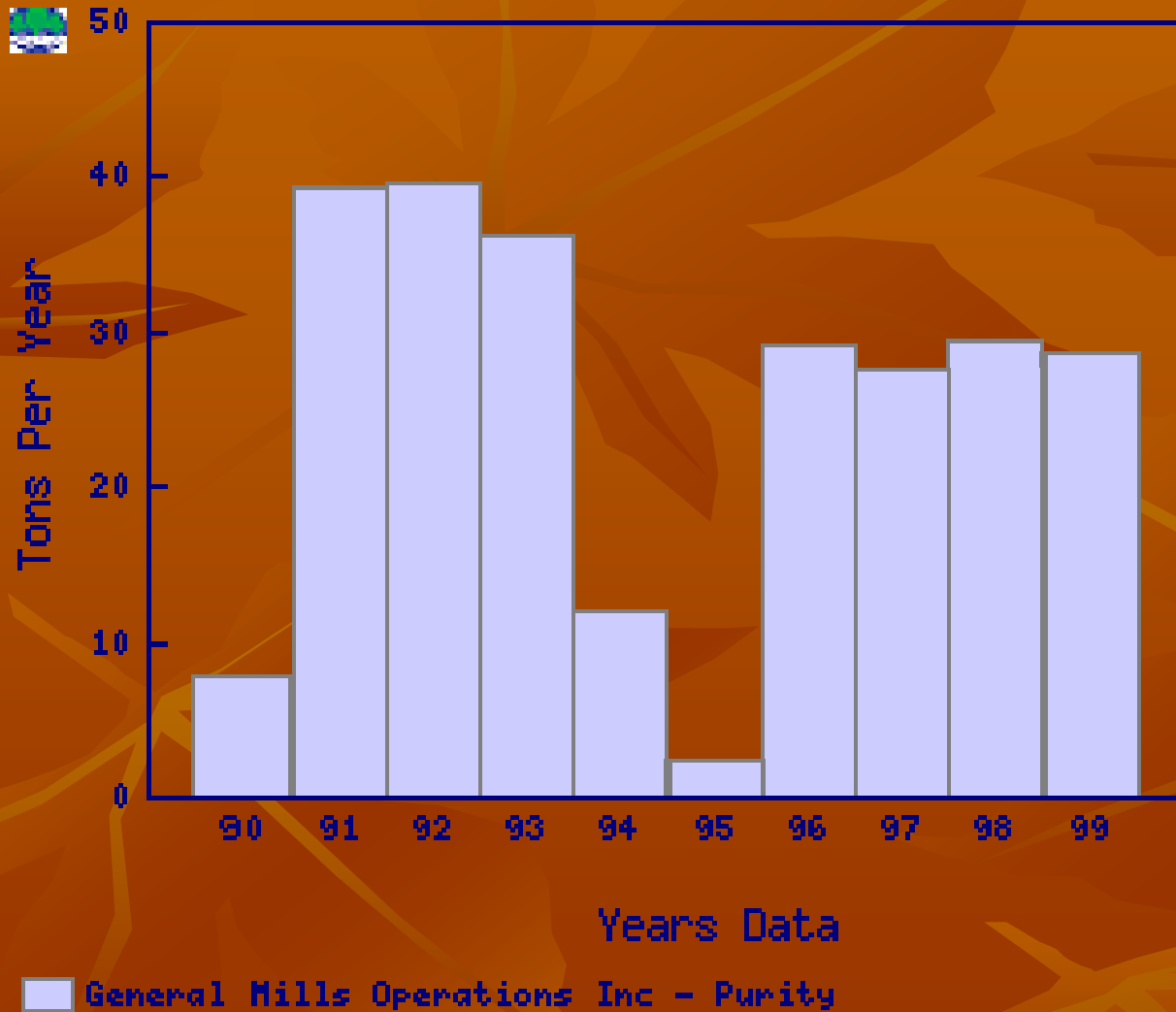
Golden Valley, MN 55426

763-764-2311

SIC Codes

2041

The text on the left shows the business profile for each of the company pages. The name, address and website is located at the top followed by the types of products the company produces, its number of employees, annual sales, contact person, parent company and SIC Codes.



This graph shows how much a company has released of its most common pollutant in the last ten years. This allows the viewer to see if the company is setting trends in increasing or decreasing how much it emits every year. If you click on the graph, you can go the MPCA's page about that particular company

Recommendations for Future Research

- Research permit files from the MPCA once again to investigate emissions compliance of companies in the last ten years. Provide information on the website whether or not the company is complying with permit regulations.
- Add a page to the environmental inventory that clearly states the steps that need to be taken for site visitors to persuade companies to implement a emissions reduction plan and state agencies to implement regulations that limit air permit levels.
- Provide links to other environmental inventory websites that allows visitors to compare and contrast company emission levels in Southeast Como with other neighborhoods in Minneapolis.
- Add a comment page for visitors to post their views on why companies should reduce their emissions and how they think they should do it. The purpose being to provide a forum where the community and SECIA can collaborate ideas on how to create a healthier environment in Southeast Minneapolis

Recommendations for Neighborhood Action

Write letters to the companies themselves inquiring whether or not they have already implemented or are planing to implement an emissions reduction plan

Pros

- Illustrates level of concern from community residents to promote cleaner air in their neighborhood
- May be seen by heads of the companies as bad publicity and force them to start thinking about a emissions reduction plan

Cons

- Companies could easily dismiss letters from the community and refuse to comment on them
- It will take a sizable amount of letters to catch the attention of company heads and thus takes time for the community to come together and agree to send out letters in mass

Organize street rallies to protest company emissions

Pros

- Could lead to a swirl of media attention, through newspapers and TV coverage, allowing a larger audience to understand the high levels of air pollution in Southeast Como
- Illustration of direct action taken by the community that can promote future forms of protest
- Once again could be seen as bad publicity for the company and force them to implement an emissions reduction plan

Cons

- Takes a considerable amount of planning and participants to create a successful street protest
- Company heads could easily refuse to comment or as a cop-out say that plans are in the works to reduce emissions without actually doing so

Conclusions

- The environmental inventory website turned out to be a resounding success and is a great stepping stone for future expansion of the site. I like the colorful and effective looking graphics used to make the site, the ease at which viewers can navigate the links and the availability of resources to provide further information about company pollutants and health effects.
- SECIA's website could become an invaluable template for other neighborhood organizations in the Twin Cities to create their own online inventory. Thus, neighborhood groups could feed off one another to access air, land and water pollution emissions by companies in Minneapolis and St. Paul.
- This internship has allowed me to learn how frustrating it can be to locate information about companies. The MPCA files for each of the companies listed in the inventory were largely sparse and did not provide much information about the history of air permit compliance by the companies.